



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.  
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION  
1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986

# Press Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Hurricane Chevrolet Dealership Agrees to Honor Free Gas Offer**

Attorney General Darrell McGraw announced today that his office had entered into an agreement with Hurricane Chevrolet, a car dealership located in Hurricane, West Virginia. As often happens in these kinds of cases, the local dealership was approached by an out-of-state marketing company with the idea of a "free gas" sales promotion. In May, 2008, the marketing company mailed Hurricane Chevrolet customers a flyer on the dealership's behalf that stated the consumers had won one of several prizes, including \$150.00 in free gas at participating service stations. Consumers were instructed to take the solicitation to the dealership to find out what they had won. Consumers who "won" the \$150.00 gas card quickly discovered there were strings attached.

Instead of receiving a gas card valued at \$150.00, consumers were given a voucher to complete and mail to FreeBeeGas.com. They were also required to pay a \$5.00 refundable activation fee and wait up to 6 weeks for their voucher to be processed. Only then did consumers discover that in order to obtain their "free" gas, they first had to purchase \$100.00 of the same brand of gas and send their receipts to FreeBeeGas.com. For every \$100.00 worth of receipts they mailed to FreeBeeGas.com within a given month, they received a \$25.00 gift card. In other words, consumers had to spend \$600.00 in order to receive the full value of the offer.

"It is unlawful to advise consumers that they have won something and tie any other requirements to the receipt of the prize," stated Attorney General McGraw. "All the hoops consumers had to jump through to get their free gas were stated only in the fine print – a clear violation of the West Virginia Consumer Credit and Protection Act."

Hurricane Chevrolet has agreed to pay \$150.00 to consumers who file complaints with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by September 28, 2009. In order to qualify for relief under this settlement, consumers must have received the free gas card promotion from Hurricane Chevrolet in May 2008, must provide proof that they paid the \$5.00 activation fee to FreeBeeGas.com, and must file a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division on or before September 28, 2009. Consumers who meet these requirements will receive a check in the amount of \$150.00 from Hurricane Chevrolet.

"Consumers must always be wary of offers for free gifts and remember that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," warns Attorney General McGraw. Consumers may request forms to file complaints with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by calling 1-800-368-8808 or downloading a complaint form at [www.wvago.gov](http://www.wvago.gov).

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